LETTERS

ON THE

CONDITION OF THE AFRICAN RACE

IN THE

UNITED STATES.

BY A SOUTHERN LADY.

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LETTER I.

WASHINGTON, *Sept.* 15, 1851.

To GENERAL JOHN H. HOWARD:—

SOUTH CAROLINA, our native State, my dear brother, was one or two centuries ago the pet of royalty. It was settled by the Cavaliers under the promise of large grants of land from the king; and our own family, it seems, was induced to emigrate there from the stimulant of the same pledges. I do not remember whether the titles you still hold in your possession of the large grant we received, was dated in the reign of George II. or his predecessor. Be sure, when you come to Washington this winter to make us a visit, to bring all these old land titles, etc. to me; they will be valued relics of a by-gone age. This grant to us was situated in what is now called Beaufort District. It was a neck of land not very far from Broad River, surrounded by rich islands, which our ancestors by their enterprise and energy, finally converted into a flourishing cotton, rice, and corn growing plantation. They were literally "monarchs of all they surveyed." They courted no man's favor, they feared no man's frown; and neither tradition nor the malice of enemies has ever, even up to the present generation, accused them of a disgraceful, lawless, or criminal act.

Believe me, that the spirit of lordly independence they always developed, was generated more or less, by their owning so much land, upon which they could produce every necessary of life without extraneous patronage. I am proud, very proud, my brother, that

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this venerable plantation, so sacred to us all, has been our home from that day to this. No stranger has ever been able to buy from us one foot of the soil. It has been ours, wholly ours, from the time we first received the grant up to the present moment. The bones of our ancestors (some of whom fought bravely in our triumphant war of independence) have rested there for four, five, or six generations; and surely every refined feeling of our hearts must of necessity cling with love and veneration to this consecrated ground. You may form then some idea of my solicitude, when I, who have been compelled to live at the North for several years, learned through the papers that *Beaufort District* was one of the principal starting-points of the secession movement, and that you yourself was much inflamed in your feelings in favor of it. My brother, you will not suspect *me* of treachery, when I assure you that South Carolina is utterly mistaken in imagining that the respectable and dignified men of the North are abolitionists. Look at the self-sacrificing, the almost godlike patriotism of Webster's attitude, when he stood up firmly against his own Northern prejudices and the seeming threats of his own constituents, and boldly argued in the defence of our rights under the Constitution as slaveholders. His enemies fondly hoped that even his own State would expatriate him from her affections, and refuse to send him back to the Senate. Many of them asserted that politically he was now dead; yes, they were foolish enough to believe that his noble, patriotic, Christian efforts to make peace among all the contending members of that great family of brothers that constitutes these United States, would blast his influence at the North.

I should, indeed, have blushed for the Yankees, if this, Webster's crowning moral act as a peace-maker, had remained unappreciated. But you remember how many communications he immediately received, approving of his course. I was very near him in the Senate, when he delivered his truly national speech, and not very far off sat our own physically emaciated, but still majestic Calhoun. My eyes were riveted in veneration and hope, first on one, and then on the other of these two blazing lights of genius; and I was delighted afterwards to learn that Mr. Calhoun, just before he died, remarked, "that although Webster had been his political opponent all his life, he had always been forced to approve in him, one striking moral peculiarity, namely, that he could not speak with power on any subject, if that subject did not command the entire consent of his *intellectual* judgment that it was right and true." Would to God

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that all our versatile statesmen and orators were alike incapacitated to argue without conviction of the truth of their theme!

Webster's manner on the momentous occasion when he delivered this great speech, was that of a man who fully comprehended the solemnity of his attitude as a national peace-maker, and had also fully counted the cost of offending perhaps his political constituents at the North. But that healthy appreciation of *truth* that has always commanded a perfect mastery over his intellect, and that unfeigned love of his country that has grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength, seemed to have chased out of his mind and heart every thought of self. There was no vainglorious ranting or roaring about his own patriotism in desiring to become a martyr for his country. No, there was the most quiet, simple dignity, and yet evident consciousness of overpowering strength in the truths he was expounding, that marked his every word and look. In general society in Washington, Webster's manner is cold and abstracted, and to me he has the look and air of a man who, like King Solomon, realized the perfect vanity of all earthly hopes and schemes. I have heard a great many ladies remark, that when they spoke to him at the levees, his eye rarely expressed that he even heard what was said, and he seems to perform the tedious conventionalities of receiving crowds of company on public occasions, like a man whose body has been galvanized to perform these ceremonies, while his mind is far away, in a world of its own creation. But when he stands up to make a speech in the Senate, he is certainly the most august, commanding, and godlike-looking specimen of dignified manhood, that could be found in the world. No one, I assure you, on this earth, looks like Daniel Webster.

I have dwelt thus minutely on his peculiarities, because the Southern people must ever regard him with friendly interest, and as entitled to their deepest respect, for his fearless exalted patriotism in upholding at all times the letter and spirit of that constitution that defends us as slaveholders.

But not only has Webster, my dear brother, thus consecrated the whole weight of his influence, for the carrying out in good faith all the provisions of that world-renowned instrument, that was framed by men whose far-reaching sagacity, intellect, and philanthropy must always be in the van of that of the abolitionists; I say, not only has the Massachusetts statesman, whose mental strength is an avalanche of crushing capacity, volunteered his influence in defence of our rights under the Constitution, but the most gifted of our Northern

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brethren generally, have poured out the fires of their eloquence in this patriotic cause throughout the Northern cities, making stump speeches, and urging the people, by every instinct of love to their noble country, to cease the suicidal effort to goad the Southern States into withdrawing from this incomparable Union. Believe me, my brother, the abolitionists are as hateful to the dignified statesmen at the North, as they are, or ever can be, to those at the South. In all my journeyings at the North, and in all my arguments with Northern men, I have never met a single gentleman, who would own himself an abolitionist. Even Gov. Seward, whom we regard as so politically unsympathizing with the South—but who is nevertheless a man of talents and education, and also possesses many domestic virtues—even *he*, I will venture to assert, would not have his reputation for common sense, or philanthropy, or enlarged statesmanship, insulted, by really advocating, that all the negroes in the South should be made free, and let loose upon society to indulge many of their untamed fiendish passions, their extreme laziness, and their utter incapacity for governing themselves, positions that every Southern planter, and every man who has benevolently studied their character, or possesses respectable inductive power of thought, has long since acknowledged. The Northern man does not, I assure you, love the black man, and never dreams of lifting him up to equality with the Anglo-Saxon race; and when he says, "I would not own a slave," he means, that he could not tolerate negroes near him, and would not, on any account, endure the vexation and trouble of taking care of them. Did you ever hear an instance of a Northern man marrying a rich Southern girl, and then magnanimously giving up all her property in slaves, for the sake of his love to the black race, or of the abstract principle of freedom? And do we not know from daily observation, that the most exacting and hard-hearted masters in the Southern States, are Northern men, and foreigners? The reason of which is, that they are not acquainted with the negro capacity of mind or body, and therefore expect the master's orders to be appreciated, and his work done, in quality and quantity, such as the white laborer accomplishes with ease for his employer at the North. Even the clergymen, who come from New York to South Carolina, and take charge of our country churches, rarely if ever command the confidence of the poor blacks. In Grahamville, South Carolina, where the slaves are so numerous, they have said to me, over and again, "We do not like that Northern parson; we see he despises us in his heart, and his manners are so cold and unsympathizing, and so exacting towards us, that we can-

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not talk to him about our souls, with the freedom we do to our own ministers, who own slaves themselves, and therefore know how to feel for us."

This fume and fuss in Congress, my dear brother, about slavery, is nothing but sectional jealousy, and the want, frequently, of mental ability to make a striking speech; and therefore, this exciting subject is seized upon as a dernier resort, for the purpose of arresting the attention of the public to speeches that are otherwise so tame that they could not command a single hearer.

The Southern gentlemen, who are generally planters, are rich, and lordly in their feelings. They labor severely with their brain, but not with their hands, to conduct their large establishments; and this sort of aristocratic life is hateful to some classes at the North, and they, therefore, from a natural feeling of envy, strive to impoverish us by the abolition of slavery. There may be a few, who are sincerely deluded, and have benevolent instincts in their efforts to free our slaves; but I have proved that these are those kind of fanatics, who compass the earth to carry out schemes of philanthropy, while they allow the poor blacks, immediately in their midst, to famish with hunger, and die like brute beasts, without a knowledge of their Creator, or the hell to which their crimes are hurrying them.

The black man can never rise to any equality whatsoever with any other foreigner that emigrates to the North. And the Free States are beginning to enact laws, to *drive* the colored people out from among them. They say, "They are a nuisance, a perfect incubus;" that all foreigners can do something useful in manufacture or the arts, or in agriculture, which will advance the country that nestles them in its arms; but the free black man is too lazy, too unenterprising, or, what is much more true, too degraded a caste, to be allowed to compete with the white laborer.

In the city of Brotherly Love, in the midst of the disciples of William Penn, I searched for some evidence of equality between the two races, and I found none. There are no professional black gentlemen there, and very few who are even mechanics. The industrious, respectable negro, in Philadelphia, accumulates the same comforts, and performs, almost universally, the same menial work that he does in Charleston, South Carolina; that is, he carries "bricks and mortar," and waits on white people as a servant, in private houses or hotels; while the lazy and immoral, who are the slaves of their own degraded natures, and have no kind masters to feed and clothe them, and control their brutishness, die like dogs, without any of the necessaries of life.

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I will soon write an account of the lowest classes of negroes in Philadelphia, where I have taken some pains to ascertain the facts. I understand that they are even worse off in New York, where the white foreigners are so numerous, that they monopolize all the work, and push the black man not only out of all mechanical trades, but even out of the most menial labors. And then, the hatred of races is so prominent there, that I heard of an old black preacher, who, in one of his sermons, while detailing to a white congregation their numerous grievances in the city of New York, asserted, "That he, old as he was, had to walk three miles to church, to preach, because the white people would not allow a negro to ride in the omnibuses." In the South, a black man can ride alongside of his master, and he will converse kindly all day with his slave, because he has no fear that he will presume to equality with him; but in the North, gentlemen are forced to keep these people at an awful distance, to prevent their ignorant and impertinent assumptions.

My heart burns with indignant feeling when I see that the poor foolish negro is seduced from his master, and brought to our Northern cities, or smuggled into Canada, where he is alike despised and deserted, and left to famish, or exist in a place so small and filthy that our cows could not survive a winter in them. I have obtained a statistical pamphlet, printed by highly respectable gentlemen in Philadelphia, that reveals the hopeless desolation, and the agonizing sufferings, of the miserable, degraded classes of negroes in that city.

Poor slave! you once had a master, whose interest and whose humanity protected you, and supplied your every want; who kept you from idleness and drunkenness, and from the indulgence of crime and fiendish passions; but, like a wayward child, you have fled from your best, your most sympathizing friend, and sought refuge from salutary restraints among the Pharisaical abolitionists, who should be classed with those men whom the Saviour addressed "as compassing sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." The abolitionist urges the slave to kill his master, who comes to Pennsylvania, to recall him home. Does such advice belong to the spirit of Christ, or the spirit of the devil? Is any such counsel to be found in the word of God? which commands "servants to be obedient to them that are your own masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ." "Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God, from the heart." "With good-will doing service, as to the Lord, and not

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unto men." Immediately after this exhortation to servants, there is one to the master; and therefore, no one seeking truth could assert that the Bible does not recognize the relative condition of master and slave.

The deluded, or rather the impious abolitionist, after advising the negro to become a murderer, after making him defy the laws of God, and the wise laws of our great country, leaves him to starve. For such Pharisees can never perpetrate an act of charity, where no notoriety is to be gained, where no eye but that of the great God is to be witness to his self-denial in making personal sacrifices, in order that he may minister to the daily, hourly wants of his victim, the poor desolate, ignorant African, whom he has enticed, unfledged, from the warmly-feathered nest that God had given him in his master's own self-interest, which formerly commanded for him everything necessary to life or godliness.

But a truce, my brother, to these reflections, that stir up the depths of my heart, as a warm friend of the slave; and let me here assure you, that the very last elections in the North prove that the abstraction called abolitionism is so absurd, that it cannot any longer be used even as a political hobby. Free-soilism, which is much more popular, as a political step-ladder, has no basis more elevated.

No! it is nothing more than sectional jealousy, lust of power, and love of strife, which is inherent in strong wills against determined adversaries, that keeps up this war of words,—and not of conviction in Congress; and then designing, ambitious men, who, all the world over, use the prejudices, and passions, and weaknesses of the masses, for a stepping-stone to their own selfish aggrandizement, rejoice in and stimulate every idiosyncrasy that can be converted into political capital. I do earnestly wish that our Southern members could see through the object of demagogues, in encouraging these furious debates in Congress. For a dignified or contemptuous silence on our part, would put a stop to the quarreling and to the vainglorious taunting speeches, that are used as the stepping-stones to high offices, by these heartless politicians. There are nearly twenty-five millions of people in the U. S., and it would be absurd stupidity in us to expect they could exist without seeking some element for strife, or envy against each other. Union of interest and of feeling, among a dense population, can only be expected when we all have learned to "love God with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves." Suppose the North, from their majority of votes, does prevent us from carrying our slaves to California, or Oregon. *This* will not hurt us, as the present area of

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slavery is so large already in the United States, that we can scarcely conceive of a time, when we would not have abundant room to operate with our slaves. These slaves were thrust upon us by Spanish, Dutch, and English cupidity, prior to 1776. And you know that, if the majority of Northern votes quadrupled our own, they could not abolish slavery at the South, without first abolishing the Constitution; as that instrument, in the letter and in the spirit, received us as slaveholders, and guaranteed our property; and God requires, when we swear to our neighbor, that we disappoint him not, even to our own hindrance. Mr. Calhoun said, that power was always aggressive, but these United States are bound together by such subtle chains, that, before they can be snapped, the whole people must be given up to believe a lie, and to commit national suicide; as, "united we stand, divided we fall," from all our hard-earned national glory, prosperity, happiness, and well-directed influence over other nations.

In the higher questions, affecting the divine government, Africa, at the era of the discovery of America, furnished, under the most sordid influences, a portion of her population to supply the defect of the aborigines of this country in compulsory labor. But let us remember that, although it is too true that they were brought here by Spanish, Dutch, and English cupidity, they were taken from the very lowest state of barbarism. Not only were they destitute of the knowledge of God, but also destitute of social virtues. A brutal father often selling his own children for a glass of grog, or to obtain any of the lowest temporary gratifications. Dare any Christian man, therefore, assert that the degraded African heathen has not been benefited, for time and eternity, by being brought even as a slave to this Christianized country?

Why, oh why! should we quarrel like children, about those things that have really no existence in the convictions of our judgment? Let the abolitionist rave as he pleases; he knows that there is such an inherent hatred of races in the human heart, that the black man can never rise to equality with the white race in America, or anywhere else, except it be in Africa.

I sometimes think that the mark put upon Cain, by which all were to know him, was a black skin. You remember the remarkable prophecy of Noah, in Gen., chap. ix., 25th, 26th and 27th verses, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." You know the Indian is generally

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supposed to be descended from Shem, the white man from Japheth, and the black man from Ham. If so, the prophecy has been literally fulfilled in America. For we dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan is our servant. But another truce, my brother, to these reflections, that engage my thoughts night and day. In my next letter, I will recall the happy condition of my father's numerous slaves, and then contrast them with the degraded class of negroes in the Northern cities. In the mean time, do not imagine that, because I live in the North, I am not a Southerner in all my aspirations. No! I am proud that I was born in South Carolina; and, whatever politicians find it to their interest to say to the contrary, there is no people in the United States, or in the world, who are more refined, intelligent, magnanimous, self-respecting, and bold in defence of their principles, and exalted in their conceptions of right and wrong towards God and man, than the people of South Carolina.

LETTER II.

WASHINGTON, *Sept.* 20, 1851.

TO GENERAL JOHN H. HOWARD.

IN my last letter, my dear brother, I promised to write off for you a reminiscence of the happy condition of my father's numerous slaves, on our plantation in South Carolina, and then to contrast it with that of the "fugitives from labor" who have fled to the Northern cities. I can speak certainly, however, only of the condition of this degraded class in Philadelphia, and in New York, where I have been on a visit of several months, and took some pains to ascertain all the facts, of which you shall be duly informed. How I do love to recall the patriarchal responsibility, and tenderness, my father felt for his poor, ignorant, dependent slaves. My earliest recollections are fraught with the happiness with which his negroes sallied out in the fields, when it did not rain, or bounded into the cotton-house, when the weather was inclement, to perform their daily tasks, in cleaning the cotton for market; how they sported their jokes together when at work, and returned home singing, after their specified healthy labors were done. They all had their comfortable houses, that comprised a chamber for each family, and a sitting-room, from which towered up a capacious chimney, and the said room

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was ventilated by a front and back door, and two windows, out of which you looked upon a garden or orchard of their own; and, not a very great way off, an acre or two of ground, given to each of them by their master, to plant whatever they pleased, for their own use, independent of the weekly provisions he gave them. They had free access to all the wood they chose to burn, and it is the habit of the negro to keep up large fires all night, winter and summer. As soon as their task was done for their master (and these tasks, I believe, are determined by law), their whole time was their own. My father's negroes generally finished their work in the fields, at two, three, or four o'clock, P. M. Every infant child had its own particular nurse, as none of the boys and girls were put to work in the fields, until they were twelve or fourteen years of age, and even then, great care was taken to give them only such moderate tasks as would not prevent their growth, or full muscular development. The employment, therefore, of all the boys and girls, was to be nurses for their mothers' infant children. When the mothers were out in the fields the nurses, and the infants, were all left in the charge of an experienced woman, who was responsible to the master, if anything happened to them, during the absence of the parents. Their every complaint against each other was lodged in his ear; as the passions of the negro are so cruel, so uncivilized, that every planter has to make stringent laws against their fighting on the plantations. By his own wisdom and authority he settles their disputes. I remember a simple-minded African woman, called Binah, on our plantation, whose husband was a smart, rich carpenter, named Toney. They were both our own slaves, and when her husband died, his relatives assumed that he had left all his property to them. She had been a most exemplary wife, and as soon as my father learned the injustice that was to be done to her by Toney's relatives, he called up old Mingo, his faithful driver, and commanded him to see that nothing really necessary to Binah, of her husband's property, should be taken from out of her house. This poor wife was thus rescued from the sharpers, who would have stripped her of all the hard-earned comforts her husband had throughout life surrounded her with. Binah always used to set a table for her husband (they had no children), and she stood up and waited on him until his meal was finished; after he retired, she ate her own dinner. I believe this sort of, at present, unfashionable respect for husbands is common among all genuine Africans.

Almost all the men on my father's plantation owned a canoe, and made money by catching fish, shrimps, and oysters, in their own time.

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For one drum fish, which is very large, and the negroes are very successful in catching them, they could obtain a dollar or perhaps more in the neighboring villages. They raised hogs, poultry, vegetables, fruits, groundnuts, bennie, and anything, indeed, they chose to plant on their patch of ground. They were given certain days in the year to work their own fields; but this did not seem very necessary, as every day of their lives they had some time that was exclusively theirs. My father owned large twelve-oared boats, in which we made frequent trips to the towns of Beaufort and Savannah. His negroes would load the said boats with their own produce, that they were carrying to sell, until I used to feel fearful lest the weight of the cargo would sink the boat. The most delightful music I ever listened to was the wild songs of these athletic boatmen, at night, on the water; and should there chance to pass us a "rival yacht," our men would ply their oars with renewed energy, and challenge their neighbors to a race. If the master, or any other planter, bought a hog, a horse, or poultry, or anything else from a negro, and did not pay him, such a man was scorned by public opinion as a low-lived, dishonest wretch, who could be so degraded as to cheat a poor African slave.

The master and his people are so identified, that if a white man molests your slave, you are instantly insulted; and you frequently quarrel with and even fight him, as quickly as you would resent a wrong done to your child; and any master, who is known to be cruel or unkind, is perfectly despised by public opinion.

You know all the negroes in the South are allowed three or four days every Christmas, for a jubilee, and I so vividly remember the patriarchal benevolence my father's countenance exhibited, when out of his abundant larder he contributed everything necessary to these jovial feastings among his slaves. Some of them spent the holydays in playing on the violin, and other instruments, for their young friends to dance by; others went from place to place, to visit their neighbors, and others held prayer-meetings, where most of the night, even, was spent in singing psalms, in religious exhortations, and in prayer. In sickness, my father almost always administered their medicines with his own hands, and personally saw that their nurses attended to all their wants. One of my slaves had an infant child two months old who was attacked with an affection of the windpipe. I never saw such extreme suffering; it was one continual spasm and struggle for breath. The physician visited it several times every day, but could give no relief. The poor little sufferer seemed as if it would

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neither live nor die. These extreme tortures lasted a whole week before it breathed its last; and my own mind was so excited by its sharp and constant convulsive shrieks, that I never left it night or day, and could not sleep, even a moment, sitting by its side; and yet its own mother slept soundly at the foot of the bed, not because she was fatigued, for she was required to do nothing but nurse the dying child; and I only mention it to show that the master's feelings are sometimes even deeper than the mother's.

The negroes are taught in the Sunday-schools all the requirements of God's law, and their masters are now commencing to build churches for them on the plantations. They are so gregarious, however, they prefer to walk several miles to a large church, and there exchange greetings with each other. They confide in their master, and they feel no enmity towards him when he is forced to punish them. My father cultivated numerous fruit-trees, and nearly the whole family of nuts. Sweet and sour oranges, figs, pomegranates, pears, &c., grew in great abundance around our hospitable mansion, that we named Orange Grove; and the long row of neat-looking negro-houses, always kept purely white, from being whitewashed every year, gave the place, as you passed it on the river, the appearance of a small city, almost enveloped in woods. He also owned hundreds of cattle, sheep, hogs, cows, and numerous horses and oxen, and he raised for his own use (as it is considered mean for the master to sell poultry off of a large plantation), I say raised scores of turkeys, geese, ducks, and many other domestic fowls; and yet his negroes rarely were known to steal anything from him, as they knew they would always come in for their share of their master's temporalities, independent of what they raised for themselves.

The women are the most enthusiastically fond foster-mothers, when they are called upon to nurse the infant child of their owners. They love their master most sincerely, and mourn with intense grief when he dies. They attend his funeral, and, from respect to his memory, are not required to work for several days afterwards. Their own dead they bury with great ceremony, and always have a feast when the funeral is over.

My father always provided for them the most suitable clothing, shoes and blankets, &c. They received their weekly allowance of provisions every Monday morning, and were, besides, encouraged to ask for any *extras* that their sickly caprices of appetite might demand from their master's private larder. Their pipes and their tobacco, and all such to *them* important luxuries, were never forgotten in lay-

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ing in our stores for the year. The clothing of the men and children was cut out and made by the seamstresses on the plantation, appointed for the purpose. This patriarchal oversight over them, from day to day, and their simple feeling of confidence and love towards their master, has of late years been impinged upon by the diabolical efforts of the abolitionists, who whisper in their ear the envenomed poison of suspicion, hatred, and murder, against their protectors. But nothing charms the negro so effectually from his allegiance, as the hope that, if he can get to the North, and be free, he will not have to work. Twenty years ago, the planters purchased every year barrels of ardent spirits, as part of their negro rations, but now it is rarely ever given to them except by order of the physician. I never remember to have seen a field negro drunk, on the plantation, except on Christmas; and even then not more than one or two, and my father owned nearly a hundred; and I never saw a black woman, who was a slave in Carolina, drunk, in all my life. I grew up, my brother, with the conviction that the Southern slaves were the happiest poor people in the world, because I saw with my own eyes the system pursued towards them on my father's plantation, where they were so numerous, so healthy, so jovial, so contented; and I knew that all the plantations in South Carolina were governed, more or less, by the same principles of self-interest and humanity.

The abolitionist scoffs at this picture of rational happiness. He says, "We take the same care of our horses and our dogs, and for no other reason than that they are our property." I myself have studied the selfishness of the human heart, until I believe there is greater security in its being the self-interest of our friends, to cherish and take care of us, than perhaps from any other motive. A man may cease to love his wife, his father, his mother, his sisters, his brothers; but who ever heard of his hating, or *designedly* hurting himself, unless he was a lunatic. Self-love is an undying passion; and so long, therefore, as this principle governs the human heart, the abolitionist may cease his absurd commiseration of the Southern slave. We may, as these Pharisees profess to believe, be divested of every noble social virtue; but we have still remaining too much of the Yankee in us, to hurt our own property, by cruelty or hard work, or any tyrannical oppressions that destroy the health or curtail the lives of our slaves. And let us entreat that the poor wretches, who live and die like dogs in New York, Philadelphia, and other Northern cities, may come in for a small share of that surplus humanity, that seems like a fire in the bones of the abolitionists; that is seeking vent, but not in godlike charities to

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the miserable starving foreigners, who arrive by thousands every day among them; but, Satan appearing to them as an angel of light, sends them to the peaceful cottage of the far-off slave, to stimulate him to fiendish and bloody deeds. There are in the South some bad men. They are bad as sons, as husbands, as fathers, as neighbors; and yet these very men have motives to be kind as masters, that nothing but idiocy or lunacy can ever blind them to. I myself believe there are hundreds of men in the world, who are incapable of a more intelligent or elevated affection than that they extend to a favorite horse or dog; and many a heart-broken wife would feel herself fortunate, if she could share with the said favorite horse or dog her husband's solicitude for their comfort and well-being.

My brother, the slave has, you know, a great protection too in public opinion, that, among the chivalrous gentlemen of South Carolina, brands with infamy a cruel master, or one who neglects those fellow-beings who are by God placed under his care, and entirely dependent on him. In all my intercourse with the world, I have never seen more beautiful sensibilities developed than I have seen around the dying couch of an old family slave, where no eye but that of God criticized the acts and feelings of the master. You remember our good old Amey, who lived to the age of one hundred and ten years. You used yourself to carry her her coffee and other dainties for breakfast, and she never tired of telling us about our father's childhood and our grandfather's kindness to his slaves. When she was dying, she insisted that I should sit close to her, and receive her last words.

I am very sure that the disinterested devotion I have seen masters extend to the wants of their decrepit and utterly helpless old slaves, will be remembered by Jesus Christ at the last day, and that those masters who have thus performed their Christian duty will receive the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." But, soothing as these retrospections of our father's useful life and humane management of his numerous slaves are to my heart, I must turn from the pleasing picture, and tell you what the abolitionists have reported about us at the North. They say, "That one of our punishments is to bury our negroes up to their necks, and leave them for a whole day perhaps thus imprisoned." "That a master claims all the property of the slave when he dies, and his wife and children get nothing; and that he takes it even when his said slave is living, if he feels so disposed." "That, when we sell our negroes, we separate little children from their mothers." "That we lock up our negroes every night on the plantations, and the master never

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lies down on his pillow without arming himself with pistols and a broadsword, to protect his family, in case of midnight alarm, from the revengeful, murderous passions of those he thus tyrannizes over." These, and numerous other such like monstrous falsehoods, are the weapons that are used at the North, to create sympathy in the cause of freeing our slaves. The devil is the father of lies, and no doubt especially claims as his offspring the fabricators of such diabolical perversions of truth. I have spent my whole life in South Carolina, in the midst of numerous plantations of slaves, and yet I do here in the presence of God assert, that I never saw, never heard, never even conceived of anything approaching to the tyranny above described, and generated only in the fiendish fancies of those whose cause needs such props of lies. My only argument with any persons who have heard and believed such monstrosities about us is, that the slaveholders may be destitute, as the abolitionists would fain believe, of every benevolent virtue, but they certainly are not divested of their love of self; and, therefore, they could not hurt or be cruel to a single one of their slaves, who, if he died, would be a loss to them of six, seven, eight, nine, or ten hundred dollars. There is a Chinese proverb that asserts, "that lies have short legs," and I do therefore trust that the unmitigated falsehoods of the abolitionists, as detailed above, may soon come to a final halt; and may they never again have any power to inveigle one single lover of his country into their dangerous, treasonable, and wicked creed!

In my next letter, I will give you an account of the miseries of some of the fugitives from labor, and of the degraded colored people in the Northern cities. In the mean time, permit me to urge you, my brother, and all other planters in the South, to renewed efforts for the temporal and eternal welfare of the black race. God bless you for all the noble sensibility and numerous acts of kindness that I have seen you extend to the poor African, wherever you have found him! May God hasten the time when Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands in adoration to Jesus Christ, as the Saviour who has at length redeemed her, and all other nations, from the curses entailed upon us by Adam's transgression!

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LETTER III.

WASHINGTON, *Nov.* 1, 1851.

TO GENERAL JOHN H. HOWARD: —

I DETAILED to you, my brother, in my last letter, the happy retrospections that I so much love to indulge in of my father's judicious and benevolent management, as lord of the manor that had descended to him in a direct line from four, five, or six generations of his ancestors in South Carolina. Oh! how contented, how divested of care, these poor ignorant slaves can be on these Southern plantations, if they have masters of good common sense, forethought, and philanthropy of character. And what can, and what does stimulate us to cultivate these characteristics of mind and heart so effectually, as the knowledge that we all possess from our childhood, that they are indispensably necessary to our conducting our plantations with success. How thankful I am to God, that the slave, who seems given up to the will of his master, should have the very strongest passion of that master's heart enlisted to protect him and provide for his every want. If a master by cruelty or oppression hurts his slave, he hurts himself in his pecuniary interests, he hurts himself in public opinion (that, in chivalrous South Carolina, regards a man a mean, cowardly wretch, who could be brutal or unkind to those who are utterly dependent on him), and he hurts himself in his conscience, which is educated to believe that the wrath of God will fall without mercy on the oppressor.

Let sickly Northern sentimentalists, then, expend all their surplus benevolence on the degraded, ignorant, starving, vicious foreigners that arrive by thousands daily in their midst; and when they have thus, by superhuman energy, reclaimed these their immediate neighbors from degradation, vice, and misery in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and other Northern cities, they can start off on a mission to South Carolina, as apostles of this age of progress; and, after giving the planters due notice to quit the home of their fathers, on pain of being butchered by servile insurrection, we will humbly crave to be allowed to look on at a respectful distance, to see if their almightinesses can make a great and glorious nation of the slaves, that we ourselves have for two hundred years been compelled to watch over, to think for, to protect, to feed, and to clothe, with the unwearied interest of a father for his children.

The abolitionists, I mean those few who are sincere in their con-

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cern for the slave, may be classed among those erratic enthusiasts, that believe this world is to be converted to righteousness by a twist and a jerk. It is a great pity that their idiosyncrasies did not lead them, *first*, to wage a war against all the liars, thieves, murderers, and adulterers, in this sin-deluged world; and *then*, after they have accomplished the glorious work of making order out of all the confusion occasioned by the fall of Adam, after we have learned "to love God with all our hearts, and our neighbor as ourselves," nothing will be easier than to get freedom, temporal and spiritual freedom, for the whole human race, that are now in bondage to their fellow-man, or are in the still more hopeless bondage to their own evil passions. "He that ruleth his own spirit," says the Bible, "is greater than he who taketh a city." And I am very sure, that the spirit of vain-glory, the desire to do some great thing, that induces the abolitionist to harden his heart against the miserable starving white emigrants, that surround his door in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, and then to expend his sensibility on our fat, healthy, happy slaves in the far off South, is a species of monomania, that is inherent in ambitious, but weak, unbalanced minds. If these said mob instigators would seek true Christian charity, and self-abasement; if these Quixotic revolutionizers would strive to obtain that love to *all* of God's creatures, that is a divine gift; if they would be willing to do good in secret among all the pitiable objects of charity that are immediately thrown by Providence on their sympathies, I am very sure they would act more consistently as philanthropists, gain more of the confidence and respect of their neighbors, and realize more of the approbation of the Almighty, than if they expended every power of their mind and heart in stirring up the slaves to suspect, to hate, to fly from, or drench South Carolina in the blood of their masters.

I have just been conversing with the sons of Mr. Gorsuch, who, you know, was murdered a short time ago, near Philadelphia. They said, the first night they went in search of their fugitives, they were frustrated, and the second night they were attacked in the outskirt of the woods by eighty negroes, with pistols and clubs, three or four feet long, and as stout as a man's arm; that these negroes had been so excited by the abolitionists, that they were foaming at the mouth with fiendish passions; that they cried out to one another, "Kill them, kill them, murder them all." They aimed their blows with such deadly effect, that soon old Mr. Gorsuch fell a mangled corpse; and one of his sons, not far off, lay weltering in his own blood, utterly helpless; and when he asked a white man, standing near, who seemed to be in

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league with these fiends, to hold up his dying head, he would not, and even refused to give him a "cup of cold water," until he had many times implored him for it. Old Mr. Gorsuch, who was thus murdered, had been a Christian for twenty-six years; and his views of eternity were so vivid, that his brother told me he could never be induced to inflict a mortal blow on any fellow-creature; he therefore fell an unresisting victim to the cruel wrath of these eighty black fiends. This abolition and negro mob, having, as they thought, murdered both father and son, went in pursuit of two other relatives, who had accompanied Mr. Gorsuch. They shot at these gentlemen so many times that one of them told me that his coat and hat were riddled with the shot; and both of them were so cruelly beaten, that they did not recover their health for many weeks. Their own ammunition got wet in the dew, and therefore was of little use to protect them against such fearful odds. Mr. Gorsuch's said fugitives were some twenty or twenty-two years of age, and they were to have had their freedom when they were twenty-eight years old. They ran away from their master, because they had stolen great quantities of his wheat, and sold it; and yet, as thieves, they were enticed away, and then stimulated to murder the master whose goods they had purloined. This, my brother, is the spirit of the abolitionists; and if such traitors to their country's laws, and the laws of God, if such murderers can escape, our government is entitled to no respect.

There scarcely ever was a time in the history of the world, when man did not enslave his fellow-man, and, probably, this will continue to be practised, more or less, until the glorious season of the millennium, "when the lion shall lie down with the lamb, and a little child shall lead them."

Why, oh why! does not the abolitionist, if he professes Christianity, see that his work is not of God? That to urge a slave to suspect, to hate, to fly from, and to murder the master, who has reared him up from infancy; who has given him everything necessary to life or godliness; who has protected him from every foe, even the foes of his own lazy and evil nature; who has watched over him in sickness, supported him in old age, and felt responsible about his being educated for happiness beyond the tomb;—I say, why do not these deluded enthusiasts see, that they are carrying out, not God's will, but that of the devil? They are surely doing evil, that good may come. Jesus Christ, our great Exemplar, who "went about doing good," and who yet lived in countries teeming with the most abject

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slavery;—yes, he who possessed perfect wisdom and perfect love to all of God's creatures, never was known to interfere by word or deed with civil government. No. His mission was to preach the absolute necessity of holiness, to both bond and free. The master and the slave have their own relative duties clearly laid down in the Bible; and if the abolitionist would strive to teach the poor negro to prepare for a glorious immortality, by mortifying all their evil and corrupt affections, and by doing their every duty in the station in which God has placed them, they would then, indeed, be apostles of the age of progress, and deserve to be classed among the true Christian friends of Africa's benighted hosts.

Slavery or freedom for the slaves is not an open question under the present Constitution of these United States. The North must deliver to us our fugitives from labor, or must be guilty of treason against the known laws of the country. The Southern men entered this confederacy with their slaves. And so long as this Union is to hold together, so long the North has no right to decide for us, whether slavery or unlicensed freedom is best for our poor, ignorant, dependent slaves. Even should this Union be dissolved, the Southern men would not give up their property, and the North would have to wage a war of extermination against every white man in the Southern States, before any such fanatical schemes could be carried out. No sane man asks a numerous population to give up every cent of their property, and become beggars, for the sake of an impracticable abstract principle of freedom. Such absurd moon-struck theorists, not to say fools, would employ their time to a more useful purpose, by striving to find out "how many spirits can dance upon the point of a needle."

We never even can be made to believe, that their pretended love of universal freedom, is not mere canting hypocrisy, until they themselves do what they require us to do; that is, give up all their property. Yes, sell all their merchandize, and deliver up all their bank stock, and every cent they own, to the cause of liberty; the Quixotic cause of freeing our slaves. I, for one, am ready at any moment, to remove the stumbling-block of slavery out of my Northern brother's way, if he will give me the means to obtain my daily bread; that is, if he will give me six or seven hundred dollars a piece for every slave I own, and afterwards promise me to see that, as a freeman, he is as well taken care of as he was when I owned him as property.

St. Paul said, "that if meat caused his brother to offend, he would eat no meat as long as the world lasted;" and, in the spirit of this beautiful sentiment, I am sure that I can promise for all real Christ-

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ians in the South, that, if their weak-minded abolitionist brother will imitate the like self-sacrifice, and send them a check on their bank for the above-named necessary sum of carnal dust, for each of their slaves, they too will carry out towards them in good faith the sentiment of Paul. That, although meat is permitted him to eat, every day, by God himself, he will give it up, rather than offend even a simple, narrow-minded, but sincere lover of Jesus Christ.

The Southern men are educated as planters, not manufacturers, or merchants; and, consequently, if our slaves are taken from us, we are sunk in poverty. A white man cannot bear the scorching sun of the South, like the African who luxuriates in the heat of our climate, and dies when he is subjected to the cold of the North. Even the mulatto cannot bear the heat of our cotton-fields. Consequently, if the slaves were given their freedom, the cotton that supplies the whole North would cease to be grown; for none but our black people can raise it; and they are so inherently lazy, that they never could be hired to work consecutively, for a whole year, without compulsion. Their capriciousness would, without fail, lose every crop of cotton. Let me here quote for you some remarks that I have found in letters written from Dominica, after the emancipation of the slaves in the British West India Islands. These letters were addressed to a Mr. Roberts, of New Jersey, by his son-in-law in Dominica. He says: "The emancipation of the negroes has, my dear father, been the destruction of Dominica; and the whole colony is completely ruined, as the negroes will not work."

"Your coffee estates on this island, that in 1803 yielded you twenty thousand a year, do not now yield your son one dollar. The price of sugar and coffee is so much depreciated, that half the estates in the West Indies give no income whatever to the proprietors. The free negroes are so lazy, they will not pick up the coffee for love or for money, and we do not make enough to pay for the freight of our produce to England. The estates here, that were valued at several hundred thousand dollars, if sold *now*, would not command the sums that were made from their yearly produce alone. I should be very glad if I could give up business, but the truth is, those who are concerned in West India affairs are sunk to the lowest state of depression; many planters who had their ten thousand pounds a year have now no income at all."

Can any real lover of his country wish to see any part of the United States thus impoverished, by giving the negroes up to the only freedom which their degraded minds crave? Which is freedom

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from labor, and freedom to indulge their criminal passions? But, my brother, a truce to these reflections on the strange medley of inconsistent passions, and yet, at times, godlike aims, that convulse and govern the human heart. "A worm, a God, I tremble at myself, and in myself am lost." When I first realized inductive powers of mind, in very early youth, I lived day and night in a sort of delirium of blissful reflection on the lofty dignity, the perfection that the human mind had lost in Adam, but had now regained by the atonement of Christ—and I said to myself, "if all things are possible to him that believeth," why cannot every believer attain to that faith which will enable him to keep the holy law of God always (even as Christ did in his human nature); and thus be exalted above all the ignorance, foolishness, and degraded passions that sin first generated in our hearts and minds. I studied the character of Jesus Christ, as it was developed by his conduct while he was on earth, until I became transported with its sublime wisdom and beauty, and I felt every earthly ambition mean, in comparison with the exalted moral aspiration of being like Christ. I determined, at once, to crush all selfishness in motive or act; all foolish pride and passion, and all ambition that did not centre in this highest moral attainment. Yes, I determined to "rule my own spirit" with a rod of iron, until it obeyed my newly formed appreciation of what was really noble and true. The fierce struggles of an untamed will, that was every moment to be watched and dethroned by its high toned moral adversary, were such as God only can know and reward. I watched every thought, every motive, every act of my life, to see if they reflected the mind of Christ. I studied the Bible, night and day, with a relish I never realized from studying any other book; because I knew it was all *truth*, and, moreover, addressed to every individual believer, who had a *personal* right to claim every promise contained in it. The idea of holding communion with the God of heaven; of having the approving sympathy of Jesus Christ in all our aims, even while we are on earth, made me feel as if a Christian occupied a higher position than any king in this world. My enthusiasm became deeper, the more I contemplated the moral exaltation that the death of Christ had purchased for our once fallen natures. I determined to test how far an appropriation of the promises of God to his people, in reference to holiness, could be attained in this world; as St. Paul's description of perfect charity in the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians embraces in its details traits of endurance that are surely necessary for us only in *this* world, as no one will need them in

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heaven. I know that the Bible cannot hold out "the word of promise to the ear, and break it to the hope," and, therefore, the believer who yearns to have the noble mind of Christ every moment that he lives in this world, must be mistaken in asserting that death is our only deliverer from sin. I cannot describe to you, my brother, the enthusiasm, the absolute absorption of my mind on these subjects. As I had an abundant competence, I spent my whole time in visiting and instructing the poor; in nursing the sick; in searching out what was real grief among the afflicted; and in watching the dying Christian, to see if his mind developed those high moral characteristics that would fit him to sit with Jesus Christ at the right hand of the holy God. Not only did I entertain these views of Christian perfection for myself, but I held the whole world responsible to have like aims, and dealt out my maledictions by the square yard to all delinquents. You may form then some idea of the tortures I must have endured from hourly self-examination; and I was, after ten years remaining in this crucible, fain to exclaim with Luther, "that old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon." Still, I believe that the only reason we have not the mind of Christ in all our daily life, is because we have too much love of carnal self in us to desire it.

But now, my brother, after a long and careful study of my own heart, and the heart of the world, is it developed at the metropolis with the faithfulness of a Daguerreotype to every moral observer? I have become exceedingly mellowed in my theories about the dignity of human nature, and I feel peculiarly sympathetic towards all the beforementioned delinquents. Still, I cannot, no, I cannot find any apology for the abolitionists, who seem to set at defiance, not only the letter, but the spirit of God's holy law, are traitors to their own noble country, and appear determined, as far as their influence goes, to blot out of existence this far-famed Republic, by schism in the body politic, that will rend it to pieces, after first deluging the States in blood. And this home of the oppressed of all nations will then become a hissing and a by-word to the whole world.

"A house divided against itself cannot stand." But I promised to reveal to you the condition of the degraded class of fugitive slaves and colored people in the Northern cities; and, after your heart has been wrung by their awful destitution, I desire you to tell me if such misery was ever heard of, or ever could by any possibility be experienced by any of our slaves in South Carolina. The Southern planter would feel just as deeply humiliated, if he ascertained his slave had been forced to beg from door to door, as he would feel if

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he heard his own child had been necessitated to beg from door to door. I never, in my whole life, heard of a slave begging alms. But I find that, in the fullness of my heart, I have already transcended the bounds of a letter, and therefore must defer the description of the lowest classes of colored people in Philadelphia. The facts I have accumulated, I shall feel it my imperative duty to disseminate among the members of Congress; and as I possess the printed pamphlets themselves, that were written, not by the enemies of the free negroes, but by gentlemen of observation, philanthropy, and ability, who were evidently aiming to show off the better class of colored people, as in a state of enviable prosperity in Philadelphia, I hope to gain serious and candid consideration for these startling facts. Truth is mighty, and must prevail; and so it happened that two letters, descriptive of the destitution of the degraded class of negroes in Philadelphia, found their way into the same statistical pamphlets that were designed to give the most flattering accounts of the progress of civilization among the black freemen of the North.

LETTER IV.

WASHINGTON, *Nov.* 20, 1851.

TO GENERAL JOHN H. HOWARD:—

I PROMISED, in my last letter, to reveal to you the condition of the degraded fugitive slaves, and the degraded colored people generally, who infest the Northern cities, but particularly New York and Philadelphia.

Our fugitives from labor, you know, are almost always those who will not work; who are lazy, obstinate, and brutal in their passions, and, indeed, perfect desperadoes; who gain a livelihood by stealing, and other extempore means. You remember that one of these runaway negroes of Mr. Moultrie shot and killed his own fellow-servant not long since. I was very curious, therefore, to find out if such murderous, lazy villains, could be enticed from South Carolina, and, under the revolutionizing patronage of the abolitionists, become respectable, dignified, and wealthy ladies and gentlemen; but now, my brother, listen to me, when I assure you that the moral, industrious, enterprising negro freeman, in Philadelphia, accumulates the same comforts for his wife and children,

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that the moral, industrious, enterprising slave surrounds himself with on our Southern plantations. Our slaves, however, have no cares about want from sickness or old age, while the freeman there works harder, every day of his life, than the slave does; and is, moreover, constantly kept on the tenter-hooks, lest his employer should dismiss him, or lest he should become in arrears to his creditors from sickness, or the enfeebling effects of age.

This is the condition of the most respectable thriving negroes of Philadelphia. Now, let me hold up the curtain of misery, that hides from common observers the condition of the most degraded fugitive slaves, and the most degraded colored people of that city.

Do not understand me as intending to anathematize the inhabitants of the City of Brotherly Love for want of humanity to the colored people in their midst, as there are many noble philanthropists and Quakers there who freely give alms. My object is to prove that the black race are really inferior in their mental organization to the white race, and that God does not design them, in this country, to govern themselves; and that, when they are delivered up to self-government in the North, a large class of them languish and die from the effects of the climate, from obstinate laziness, vice, and drunkenness, and from their erratic mode of living.

Dr. Benjamin Coates, of Philadelphia, who is a man of talent, observation, and education, says:—

"The negro, or even the mulatto, is a very different person in his physical and psychical conformation from that one who may be presumed to have been held in view in our legislation, the white Anglo-Saxon, Celt, or German. His ancestry, and the prototype of his race, are calculated for the torrid zone; and even the mixed progeny suffer severely and mortally by our cold. Cheerful, merry, lounging, and careless, the Ethiopian American deeply enjoys the sun and light; delights in the open air, and is, as a general rule, constitutionally free from that deep thoughtful anxiety for the future so conspicuous in his paler neighbor."

Dr. Coates also makes some sensible remarks on the dreadful effects of prison discipline and solitary confinement, for any length of time, on the blacks. "The face of heaven," says he, "seems to him necessary to his existence; and though long confinement is, in his case, less productive of gloomy remorse, it is far more depressing to his vitality." "The morbid effects of this are unhappily visible in the production of scrofula and pulmonary consumption; more than eighty-eight per cent. of the deaths being from chronic affec-

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tions of the lungs, and from the first-named disorder." "The moral consequences are, in an equivalent degree, depressing to the mind." "It is not by remorse and anguish that he is affected so much, as by intellectual and moral weakness and decay; and gloomy confinement becomes thus, to him, mentally, as well as physically, a nearer approach to the punishment of death.

"The effect of separate imprisonment has not been, as has been erroneously charged against it, to produce insanity, although humane and strict analysis has shown many to have been affected both with insanity and with imbecility, at the times when they have committed the offences for which they are sentenced.

"The effect upon the unfortunate colored prisoners, though scarcely perceptible upon the whites, has been to produce not mania, but weakness of mind; dementia, instead of deranged excitement."

Now, my brother, who ever heard of a prison being built on one of our southern plantations? When the slave commits a crime, his master switches him, with the same impulse that he switches his own child. The slave does not hate him for thus punishing him, any more than his child does; and an hour afterwards he is as merry, perhaps, as if no chastisement had been inflicted on him. Is not such punishment much more merciful, much more suited to the negro mind, than to shut him up in a prison for months in the Northern cities, where confinement is known to have the above-named lamentable effects? They say here, that we sell our slaves. This is sometimes true; but we sell them to a master whose self-interest is just as much concerned as our own, to treat him kindly. It is a base falsehood that is fulminated against us, that we separate a mother from her little children, when we sell them. And it is equally false, that the master locks up all of his slaves every night, and arms himself with swords and guns, to protect himself, for fear of their nocturnal treacherous designs. So far from it, the master regards his slaves the best friends he has on earth. These and numerous other absurdities are believed by the abolitionists. I have introduced the remarks of Dr. Coates, to let you see what are the real opinions of thinking men and physicians at the North, about the developments, physical and mental, of the black race, and then to express my unfeigned astonishment that, with such facts staring them in the face, any persons could be found so malignant and fanatical as to inveigle the colored people from their happy home, in the warm sunny South, to come to the North to gain suicidal freedom.

Even the runaway slaves whom the abolitionists have smuggled into

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Canada, are, I learn from the papers, in such a desperate state of hopeless misery (as they never will work without compulsion), that the public has been forced to raise a fund to keep them from famishing in their midst.

Leaving the abolitionists, however, to the deep and hopeless remorse that all feel sooner or later, who have seduced a fellow-immortal into misery and crime, I will now proceed to state the condition of the degraded class of black people in Philadelphia. I mention simply what I have heard from some of the most respectable old citizens of that city. I was very anxious to see for myself such speaking pictures of the fanaticism of those who steal away our slaves and bring them here to perish; but I was forbidden by my husband to go into places teeming with pestilence, disease, and frightful enormities. An excellent Christian lady told me that she was walking in company with her married daughter one night in Reading, near Philadelphia, and she heard groans of anguish. She stopped, and soon saw a wretched black woman lying on the curb-stone, apparently convulsed with pain. She advanced towards her, to know what was the matter. The poor creature held on to her, and would not let her go. Soon, one or two humane white men were attracted to the spot, and, after seeing her desperate condition, they applied to five different negro houses in the neighborhood to beg them to take her in, but she was refused admittance, although they were offered five dollars to let her stay with them just for one night. These men, however, obtained an old settee, and laid her on it. It was bitter cold, in the month of February, and she had on little or no warm clothing. In this extremity, she was carried into a stable near by, and there her child was born. The good Samaritan that first found her never left her side until she had sent to all her friends, and had the poor woman made comfortable. She says, in this lonely stable she thought of the birth of the Saviour, and knew his spirit was near her, although it was midnight, to shield her and her helpless charge from every harm.

Another very intelligent old lady told me that one of her friends became so much excited about the condition of the colored people in Philadelphia, that she insisted on her going with her to see what could be done. They first met an emaciated little girl five years old with a broken tumbler in her hand. It contained as much whiskey as it could hold; and when they asked the child what she was going to do with it, she replied, "Why, drink it, to be sure." They then met numbers of drunken and horrid-looking black women, and finally,

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after seeing all they could, they came to the conclusion that no almsgiving could reach these people; for, if you give them money, food, or clothing, it was all pawned at the shops for drink.

A gentleman also called on us, and not knowing I was a Southerner, began to converse on the hopeless degradation of some of the free blacks in this city. He said, he had been informed that many of them lived in boxes, without any bedding or any covering, and that they had to pay the landlords of this unique lodging a few cents every night. In the day, they followed the trade of ragging and boning, that is, picking up the rags and the offal thrown out in the street, and selling them to some manufactory for a penny or two, which answered to defray the expense of the before-mentioned lodgings. Their food they obtained by begging and stealing.

This gentleman also said, "that not a half mile from Philadelphia, he understood there were three houses in which three hundred of the most degraded class of negroes lived. Their food, when they had any, was bread and grog; and in 1846, the ship-fever got in among them, and they died like dogs. Finally, the city authorities had to interfere, and break up these pestilential abodes."

Another gentleman told me, that these said negroes sometimes hired for a cent a narrow cellar to sleep in, and as its architecture did not admit of their lying down, they fastened a rope under their arms, which was suspended from the wall (somewhat, I suppose, after the manner of a modern baby-jumper), and there swung themselves to sleep. But if their slumbers were continued after early dawn, the landlord of the cellar would cut the rope and let them fall into the pit below, to wake them up. Another gentleman told me that a man in Philadelphia hired a long house, and had shelves arranged the whole length of it, up to the top of the ceiling. These shelves were rented out for four cents each to the negroes; that is, each one could hire his own length on the shelf for the above sum. The shelves contained not a single bed or a single inch of covering. They gave the same landlord four more cents for their food, which was obtained by him in this way. He hired every morning some black people to go from door to door and beg for cold victuals. This food they threw into the bags brought for the purpose; so that fish, flesh, fowl, vegetables, and fruits were thrown in promiscuously together, and when it was carried home to the landlord, he spread out a table, without any expense, with this unique hash.

These eight pennies were made by ragging and boning and prizing, and after some few years, the proceeds from this original mode

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of keeping a boarding-house, footed up thirty thousand dollars to the landlord.

I was of course astounded beyond belief by hearing such appalling accounts of misery; but I was more astounded, the next week, to receive from a highly respectable gentleman, a pamphlet containing a statistical inquiry into the condition of the people of color in the city and districts of Philadelphia. The pamphlet was designed to give a flattering view of the better classes of negroes; but unfortunately two letters, that I will now quote verbatim, found their way into the latter part of the said pamphlet.

But first, let me remark that South Carolina abounds with black mechanics, who can, in their own time, make money enough to enrich themselves with every comfort of life, as you know how rich your blacksmiths are. They are, therefore, on a par with the best classes of black freemen at the North; but listen now to the description of the degraded classes of colored people in Philadelphia, as detailed in the said letters.

PHILADELPHIA, *Dec.* 18, 1848.

"During the fall and winter of 1845 and 1846, I observed much misery and distress among a portion of the colored population of the city and suburbs, which was much increased in the fall and winter of 1846 and 1847. During the period before named, from September, 1837, to April, 1848, it increased to such extent as made it necessary to ask the intervention of the board of health and guardians of the poor. In that time, there came under my notice, seventy-six cases, colored, male and female (mostly within six blocks or squares in the district of Moyamensing), whose deaths, after a full and thorough investigation of each case, were attributable to intemperance, exposure, want of nourishment, &c.; of this number, eighteen were from 18 to 30 years of age; forty-six from 30 to 50 years, and twelve from 50 to 90 years, besides some children who also died from exposure and want of proper nourishment and care.

"Many were found dead in cold and exposed rooms and garrets, board shanties, five and six feet high, and as many feet square, erected and rented for lodging purposes, mostly without any comforts save the bare floor, with the cold penetrating between the boards, and through the holes and crevices on all sides; some in cold, wet, and damp cellars, with naked walls, and in many instances without floors; and others found dead lying in back yards, in alleys, and other exposed situations.

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"These cases were principally confined to the lowest and most degraded of the colored population, whose occupations were ragging, boning, and prizing. Hundreds are engaged in those occupations, and living as others have, that have died; many of whom, unless provided for, must become victims of death, through their habits and exposure, should the coming winter be at all severe. Most of them have no home, depending chiefly upon the success of their pursuits through the day, either in earning or begging (and I may add, stealing), sufficient to pay their grog and lodging. For food, they depend mostly upon begging, or gathering from the street what is thrown from the houses or kitchens of others.

"Lodgings are obtained from a penny to sixpence a night, according to the extent of the accommodations, with or without an old stove, generally without a pipe, a furnace or fireplace, so that a fire may be had if they have means to pay for a few sticks of wood, or some coal; and were it not for the crevices and openings admitting fresh air, many would be suffocated (a few have been) by smoke and coal gas. It is no uncommon circumstance to find several sitting around on the floor with an open furnace in their midst, burning coal. Those places are mostly back from the street, not observable in passing, reached through narrow alleys, or by a back entrance, if it be a house fronting the main street, wherein each story is subdivided into numerous small rooms, ofttimes made to accommodate as many as can be stowed into them, without regard to color or sex. Such articles as an old bed, a carpet, or even straw upon the floor, are not often seen.

"Notwithstanding their degraded occupation, yet it is possible for them to earn from ten to fifteen cents per day. There are numerous places for the disposal of their rags, bones, &c., but there are far more numerous places (and constantly increasing) for the disposal of their hard-earned (or ill-gotten) pennies; namely, at small shops stocked with a few stale loaves of bread, a few potatoes, a small quantity of split wood, some candles, a few dried and stale herring, &c., exposed to view, serving too often as a cloak, whilst behind and under the counter, concealed from the eye, are kegs, jugs, bottles, and measures, containing the poison, some at four and five cents a pint, and which is the great leading cause of the misery, degradation, and death of so many.

"Though I have observed much misery and distress both among blacks and whites, in different sections of the city and suburbs, yet

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in no portion to that extent as was found in a small portion of Moyamensing, among the blacks, principally in the smaller streets, courts, and alleys, between Fifth and Eighth, and South and Fitzwater Streets.

"Respectfully, your friend,
"N. B. LEIDY."

"A visit to the scene of this distress, made in the latter part of the ninth month, 1847, is thus described:—

"The vicinity of the place we sought was pointed out by a large number of colored people congregated on the neighboring pavements. We first inspected the rooms, yards, and cellars of the four or five houses next above Baker street, on Seventh. The cellars were wretchedly dark, damp, and dirty, and were generally rented for twelve and a-half cents per night. These were occupied by one or more families at the present time; but, in the winter season, when the frost drives those who in summer sleep abroad in fields, in board-yards, in sheds, to seek more effectual shelter, they often contain from twelve to twenty lodgers per night. Commencing at the back of each house are small wooden buildings roughly put together, about six feet square, without windows or fire-places, a hole about a foot square being left in the front, alongside of the door, to let in fresh air and light, and to let out foul air and smoke. These desolate pens, the roofs of which are generally leaky, and thin floors, so low that more or less water comes in on them from the yard in rainy weather, would not give comfortable winter accommodation to a cow. Although as dismal as dirt, damp, and insufficient ventilation can make them, they are nearly all inhabited. In one of the first we entered, we found the dead body of a large negro man, who had died suddenly there. This pen was about eight feet deep by six wide. There was no bedding in it, but a box or two around the sides furnished places where two colored persons, one said to be the wife of the deceased, were lying, either drunk or fast asleep. The body of the dead man was on the wet floor, beneath an old torn coverlet. The death had taken place some hours before; the coroner had been sent for, but had not yet arrived. A few feet south, in one of the pens attached to the adjoining house, two days before, a colored female had been found dead. The hole from which she was taken appeared smaller than its neighbors generally, and had not as yet obtained another tenant.

"Let me introduce you to our 'Astor House,' said our guide, turn-

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ing into an alley between two of the buildings on Baker street. We followed through a dirty passage, so narrow, a stout man would have found it tight work to have threaded it. Looking before us, the yard seemed unusually dark. This, we found, was occasioned by a long range of two story pens, with a projecting boarded walk above the lower tier for the inhabitants of the second story to get to the doors of their apartments. This covered nearly all the narrow yard, and served to exclude light from the dwellings below. We looked in every one of these dismal abodes of human wretchedness. Here were dark, damp holes six feet square, without a bed in any of them, and generally without furniture, occupied by one or two families; apartments where privacy of any kind was unknown; where comfort never appeared. We endeavored, with the aid of as much light as at mid-day could find access through the open door, to see into the dark corners of these contracted abodes; and as we became impressed with their utter desolateness, the absence of bedding, and of aught to rest on but a bit of old matting on a wet floor, we felt sick and oppressed. Disagreeable odors of many kinds were ever arising; and with no ventilation but the open door, and the foot square hole in the front of the pen, we could scarcely think it possible that life could be supported, when winter compelled them to have fire in charcoal furnaces. With sad feelings we went from door to door, speaking to all, inquiring the number of their inmates, the rent they paid, and generally the business they followed to obtain a living. To this last question the usual answer was 'ragging and boning.' Some of these six by six holes had six and even eight persons in them, but more generally two to four. In one or two instances, a single man rented one for himself. The last of the lower story of the 'Astor' was occupied by a black man, his black wife, and an Irish woman. The white woman was half standing, half leaning against some sort of a box, the blacks were reclining upon the piece of old matting, perhaps four feet wide, which, by night, furnished the only bed of the three. Passing to the end of the row, we ventured up steps much broken, and very unsafe, to the second story platform, and visited each apartment there. It is not in the power of language to convey an adequate impression of the scene on this property; the filth, the odor, the bodily discomfort, the moral degradation everywhere apparent. Descending with difficulty, we proceeded to examine the cellars and rooms in a building still further back, having the same owner. The same want of accommodations were observed; few, if any, there, having a trace of bedding. For the pens, ten cents a night were paid generally; eight

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cents for the rest. The miserable apartments in the houses brought about the same prices. Some rooms, however, rented as high as one dollar per week. In the damp double row of the 'Astor building,' we found, although occupied by apparently young married people, there was no child. Neither were there children to be found, except as a very rare instance, in any of the pens we examined on other property around. Struck with the fact, we concluded that an infant, if born in them, could scarcely survive there many weeks. In those families occupying apartments in buildings, which might by courtesy be called houses, though all in these parts were miserably destitute of comforts, there were a few children. They were not, however, either in number or appearance, to be compared with those healthy, happy beings, who swarm around the colored man's home in country places.

"The preceding investigation has been carefully made from the statistics obtained by personal inquiry, from door to door, and which were as accurate as can be expected from such inquiries addressed to people, many of whom are too ignorant themselves to give competent answers. The general results may, it is believed, be relied upon as exhibiting the comparative situation of the different sections of our colored population; and, without placing too much reliance upon the numerical statements, they are probably near approximations to the truth."

Such then, my brother, is the condition of the degraded portion of the negroes in Philadelphia. Can you be surprised, then, that I assert, that I can feel sympathy for a great many classes of sinners; but for the abolitionist, the faithless, heartless, wicked smuggler of our slaves, who holds out the word of promise to the ear, and breaks it to the hope; who entices him from his master and his home; who harbors and conceals him from the law, when he commits murder and treason, and indulges in other diabolical passions; and then, after he has, through their instigations, become an outlaw towards God and man, leaves him to perish temporally and eternally;—I say, for the abolitionists, whose creed leads them to do such things, I hope never to feel any sympathy, except that of wishing them converted to Christianity, and then immediately transported to heaven; for their fanaticism could never be subdued by any religion yet attained on earth; but, if they were all safely housed in heaven, they would be beyond the reach of temptation to fall back into their old sinful ways.

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